



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,  
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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they must not be relied upon to produce much deterrent effect; in other words they are not good punishments. Similar reasoning points to the necessity of not banishing the cane altogether. An experience of many years spent in the education of boys, has convinced the writer of two things: first, that the less the cane is used the better: but secondly, that its presence in the master's desk must be a felt reality. It must be there to be appealed to in an emergency. It is in many cases the most merciful, and in all cases (unless too frequent use vulgarises it) the most effectual punishment. But let it be remembered that the effect of corporal punishment is in proportion to the rarity of its infliction. The free use of a cane in school cannot be too strongly condemned. But the fact remains, that, wisely and sparingly used, and reserved, as it may well be, for the chastisement of moral offences or rebellion against authority, it gives a stability to discipline that cannot be ensured by other means. It must appear from time to time, to put itself in evidence; but its best work is done while under lock and key.

The remark just made leads to a general reflection with which this article may well be brought to a close. It is not only the actual infliction of punishment that is effectual. If the child has learned to realise that the system under which it is being trained includes the possibility of penalty, or rather the certainty of penalty, if deserved, then punishment has probably done its work. We are not thinking here of the vicious or incorrigible, but of the ordinary every-day boy or girl of our experience. Wisely treated, such children seldom require punishment. But let it be remembered that the wise treatment spoken of must include sufficient firmness and severity to implant the instinct that sees, or rather feels, that though punishment may stand in the background, yet it is there as a possibility. Thus used, and thus avoided, punishment becomes what it should be, a kind of back-bone, so to speak, to education—out of sight, but giving firmness and consistency to the whole.

## THE CHILD OF TO-DAY.

BY GRACE GWYNNE.

It is many years since that bright long summer's day we spent in the mountains, C., S., and I, and had that delightful talk which has lingered in my memory ever since, a talk which quickened our feet through the fields of heather, and made the miles fly by on the white dusty road, and the thought of which will ever be associated with the beautiful scenery through which we passed. Our argument was upon the formative influence of mind over body, and *vice versa*. The lady, a gifted and charming woman, took up her position, with Kingsley, on the idea, "The soul built for itself a home to dwell in"; and held that the spiritual and intellectual nature, if allowed free play and properly developed, would eventually mould, subdue, and transform the merely physical or animal nature. But the man, one whose literary tastes and scientific knowledge gave him the right to speak, assured us on the other hand that modern thought and scientific materialism permitted no such theory; that the possibilities of the mental are strictly limited by the physical, that every child is born into this world with its brain like a map, its powers and talents clearly defined as are the bounds of land and ocean, as little to be altered, as impossible to supply with elements left lacking by nature. This thought took deep root in my mind, and, added to observation, reading and experience, has formed the nucleus of many other thoughts upon the education of children.

If my metaphysical friends were *both* right, as I am inclined to think, and the two theories not really at variance but acting and reacting one upon another, what a light does this throw upon the right training and possible destinies of the child and our part towards it as parents! If the brain, to employ another simile, be indeed but as a palette of colours, surely the soul is the artist, and the quality of the life-pictures painted is more dependent on the hand that holds the brush than on the limited number and quality of the pigments furnished by nature! Some of our children



thus may be able but to make *monochromes* of their lives, but the "man of one idea" is generally a master in his own walk, and the "black and white" may be an artist-proof of unexampled merit, as valuable to the world as is the triumph in many colours.

It is important then that from the very first a parent or guardian should learn the peculiar traits of character, intellect, and physique, that individualize his child, and founding thereon a reasonable ambition for him, proceed to work towards it by developing his talents, training and restraining his moral nature, and endeavouring to equip him with a sound and healthy body wherewith to win his spurs in the battle of life. This discrimination of the potentialities of a child's nature may begin early; even in infancy the bias of mind declares itself by trifles.

See this little person of five or six summers who has mounted the music stool and is happily occupied "making out tunes" by ear, or the infant on whom tranquility settles as long as the barrel-organ remains outside the nursery window, a child who will try to sing before he can talk.

Here is another little one to whom a pencil is a talisman, one to whom the most worthy of letter-writers appears that one who has the sense to leave a clean half-sheet at the end; the child whose lop-sided ladies, children with water-on-the-brain, and hunting scenes of Assyrian type, adorn alike the blotting-pad and deal table, are scratched on painted windows, traced on the seashore sands, or even, as in that exquisite story of *Fan o' the Windmill*, failing other colours, are painted by the little genius on the woodland path in autumn leaves, with bluebells for a sky. The teacher tells you that one child finds arithmetic no trouble, another is so sedentary as to be with difficulty persuaded to take sufficient exercise, while his companion is stupid at lessons, but "can do anything with his hands," is always "inventing" like "Willy" in *Cushions and Corners*, who tried water-power to work a clock! The longing for a sea-life after reading "Crusoe" common to most boys at some period, and the fit of writing poetry, which is almost equally universal amongst girls at a certain age, and almost equally transitory, need prove no false lights to the watchful elder so long as they do not bear that test of true genius, *hard work*.

Children very seldom themselves know in early life their true vocation, I heard three children the other day announce their ambitions in this wise. Said a boy, "I shall be a doctor"; "and I'll be a *lady-doctor*," cried one little sister; "I wont, I know what I'll be," nodded a younger girl, "I'll be a *mother*"!

But education has to go deeper than the cultivation of obviously predominant talents. Physiologists warn us against rashly limiting the possibilities of any human brain. They tell us that heredity largely accounts for special aptitude in special subjects, certain parts of the brain long exercised becoming abnormally active, but its *latent* powers and potentialities, though neglected and undeveloped by use, are as infinite as are their sources in the uncounted ramifications of ancestry. So it may be that the very faculties and qualities apparently most needed by the child, most sighed for by the parent, may, lying dormant and hitherto unsuspected, be presently roused by patient cultivation, and triumphantly brought to light, to form in future as essential a part of the character as those powers and talents which had been recognised from the first. Such utilitarian faculties as memory, imagination, concentration, decision and precision, have an important influence in life, and if not naturally prominent can only be gained by education and habit. Nothing else can supply their deficiency, though moral defects, such as cowardice, untruthfulness, selfishness, or indolence, *may* be reached and corrected by moral influence alone. Sir. W. Hamilton tells us of a case, which is well authenticated, where a girl in high fever in a hospital, when the poor brain was completely distraught, was heard to speak fluently and coherently in an utterly unfamiliar language. After great difficulty, it was discovered that she had been speaking in the dialect of an obscure Hungarian village, her birthplace, but from which she had been removed in extremely early childhood. Hypnotism, too, discovers powers utterly unsuspected by the possessor, as Sir. William Hamilton goes on to prove by many strange but true stories.

Here surely, is hope for the dullest pupil, and for all who have to teach! And to develop the lacking, to strengthen the weak, and encourage the backward, to create higher aspirations in all, is surely the most difficult work, the most



commendable triumph of education, even more so than the fostering of an unmistakeable vocation, important as that is!

But how pitiful it is to see a young genius sacrificed to convenience or indifference, to see the natural bent disregarded, and a Pegasus put to plough; while a ploughman is given to the office stool! In these cases nature generally sooner or later asserts herself; the girl with no musical taste who had daily to waste hours "practising" like her more gifted sisters, joyfully throws aside her music when she "comes out," and perhaps as a married woman first gets a chance to use pen or brush. The born actor and actress shock the family by taking to their natural element after years of uncongenial trial of other work, the true sailor runs away to sea from a luxurious home, a desk, or a workshop; and the divinity student, for whom waits a fat family living, finds strange fascination in the lancet, and throws up all for the medical profession. We have heard of men of forty deserting army for church, and of ladies who possess more rank than money boldly taking a position in which they can exercise and profit by the only talent they possess, the art of "tossing-up a bonnet," for milliners are born, not made, as experience has taught us to acknowledge.

The inclinations of a boy are however very often taken into account seriously, when his career has to be chosen. It is the girls who have most to complain of in this respect, for though the importance of the moral training is generally realized, and their idiosyncrasies recognized, how seldom are their talents, tastes, and even genius, regarded in the business-like and practical aspect they would demand in a boy! Girls are trained to *feel*, and boys to *do*. People have a vague feeling that their girls will always have a home to turn to, and protectors to stand between them and *want*; and when, as so sadly frequent, it turns out otherwise, they seem both surprised and resentful, as if unfairly singled out for misfortune. "How much wiser it would be," says a magazine writer, "if girls were, as a matter of course, trained for a business or profession like boys, and taught from infancy that they might have some day to depend upon themselves for a livelihood; if they could learn to do even one thing perfectly and have confidence in powers by which at any time they would be enabled to support themselves. This,"

he says, "would considerably reduce the number of those poor helpless beings who continually infest my office begging me to find them some sort of work to do, yet obliged to acknowledge feebly, when I ask them the direct question, that beyond writing a good hand, there is nothing that they can do *really well*!"

As to the development of physique, this century has done much for women, as we all know. One of its glories is that girls have now a chance to grow up hardy and agile, are encouraged to excel in outdoor sports, and given drill and gymnastics to develop their muscle and expand the lungs. In the last century the girl was a mere hot-house plant, veiled and coddled, her complexion a constant care, and her dress in every way calculated to impede her healthy growth. She went out in satin slippers, wore low neck, short sleeves, and high waists, and was nearly hidden in the tunnel of a poke bonnet as she minced along the country lanes, where her grand-daughters "bike" to-day. The system produced society belles 'tis true, and the old people sigh for the Beauties of long ago, but all acknowledge that the average level of good looks is higher to-day, that prettiness is now a common heritage, and that the picturesque is more frequently met with than of yore, it is attainable now by all, even in cheap materials and in unpromising subjects. This is greatly due to the better understanding of the laws of health and hygiene in our day; rosy cheeks and bright eyes are found where fresh air is fashionable, and hair is distinctly benefitted by the lighter headgear now worn. If it were not so, the greater pressure of education in this day of female self-assertion, would produce in the next generation a race of lunatics. In these days when girls become hospital nurses, doctors, lawyers, newspaper reporters, art-workers, high-school teachers, gardeners, and lecturers, it has come to be recognized that they, too, need strength, muscle, endurance, and sound health, to compete with men in such onerous work.

We know that if a man wants to be particularly strong so as to excel in athletics, he *trains* for it. He abstains from tea, alcohol, and rich cookery, drinks plenty of milk, eats moderately of fresh meat, and keeps early hours.

Did you ever meet a girl husbanding her strength on these lines? Would anything persuade a woman to give up



afternoon tea? If girls were as sensible as their brothers at college in this respect, we should hear less of that universal scourge of womanhood and the bane of the 19th century, *neuralgia*, and less of the woman's "break-down" in hospital-ward, or examination room, on the threshold of a useful career.

Yes, our little girls' enlarged horizon necessitates an enlarged view of education and bodily training. The child of to day is as new a product of the century as is the white daffodil or the orange-coloured rose. The materials were always there, human nature is nearly as old as the vegetable kingdom, the geologists tell us, but evolution and environment have brought us a very different aspect of the young Genus Homo. But we need not go very far back to paint the contrast. Less than a hundred years ago children were quite quaint enough to form an amusing picture for our eyes. Mrs. Sherwood thus describes for us a little girl in the dress of our grandmother's young days: "She wore a pink silk slip with small violet flowers or spots, and a laced apron, with a bonnet and tippet of violet silk. If she had not a crinoline, her skirts were well stiffened with whalebone." "Our common caps fitted the head exactly and were precisely in the shape of bowls. They were commonly made of what is called 'Norwich quilt' (such as we now see many bed-quilts made of), with a little narrow plaiting round the edge. My common black caps (for mourning) were of silk quilted in the same way, and our best caps were of the same form, the foundation being of silk or satin, with gauze puffed over it, and in each puff either a flower or a bit of ribbon, finished off to the fancy with a plaited border of gauze, and larger bunches of flowers peaked over each ear."

Add to this description the corkscrew ringlets, the painfully obvious long white undergarments, white stockings and thin sandalled slippers, so familiar to us in photographs yellow with age or in old pictures, where little girls so attired roamed the meadows in low-necked dresses, assisting little boys in toby frills and "skeletons" to wreath garlands round the neck of lamb, or doe, or dog, or else offered oranges to the spectator in family groups. Oh, how stony was the pillow that prefaced those corkscrew ringlets, how rigid the discipline of family life in those orange-loving

circles! Then the child entered her parents' presence with a "courtesy," dared not speak until invited to do so, and then addressed them as "sir" and "madam." Then the parental cane was a thing of life—of every-day life! Then were lessons heartily hated and holidays found too short. How different was prim little Mistress Marjory, Dorothea, or Dulcinea, to the Dolly, and Muriel, and Gladys of our day!

The nineteenth century regards childhood with the eyes of an indulgent and fond but wise grandmother, and even government occupies half its time nowadays in legislating for children. The wrongs and the rights of the poor factory-child, the little chimney-sweep, and the poor little ones neglected in mind and body in so-called "homes" have found champions and legislation in our day, and charity, philanthropy and law watch over them from the cradle to the grave. And if the claims of the children of the poor have been acknowledged with new-born enthusiasm, the children of the rich have also benefitted by the new light in which childhood is regarded. The liberty once only accorded to the cottager's child has invaded our drawing rooms, and the smocked frock and "Tam o' Shanter," hair curled only by nature, and faces painted only by her, are familiar ornaments of the society mother's salon, and as much at home there as in their nursery. Here a baby, dressed entirely in wool *à la* Jaeger, reigns on its elaborate kindergarten creeping rug; there a young lady in sailor suit fearlessly bombards the favourite guest for chocolates. Bachelors invite them to tea in their rooms, and fancy dress balls are got up for them at immense expense. The sayings of these little people are repeated from house to house and recorded in a "mother's book," and conversation at the table is mainly sustained by them, even the youngest taking her part and asking instructive questions of her elders. The *fin de siècle* baby of two erects a telephone in the doll's house and calls out to the baby of three, "Are ye dare?" Every summer the entire family is victimised for a month in uncomfortable lodgings at the seaside "to give the children change of air," instead of their being left as of yore in charge of nurses and governesses at home, while the old-fashioned parent "took the waters" at the wells.



all this they go back to school with a joy and alacrity that fifty years ago would have made their parents think them mad!

Toys, like everything else that concerns children, have acquired a new significance in our day. A doll and "bricks" used to be thought sufficient for any child, but now the number and variety in our nurseries form indeed an *embarras de richesses*. Andrew Lang and other writers discourse learnedly upon the origin, mythical aspect, and history, of nursery rhymes and games, and the earliest education now disguises itself under the form of amusement. Under the kindergarten system little mites of two or three learn most useful lessons, attention, accuracy, defthandedness, and concentration of mind, through the medium of play; by bricks and beads they are taught the elements of geometry and arithmetic; and physical exercises and class singing are to them delightful round games in which the beloved teacher joins the fun. And classes are to be found where children are trained in domestic economy, no matter how young, by means of toys, and learn to cook a fairy dinner on a miniature stove, to wash, iron, and "make-up" starched clothes for their dolls, and to set a table, and attend, sweep, dust, and make beds in the most approved style, besides performing the whole nursery routine of bathing, dressing and feeding a baby doll, while adorned with a wee "regulation" cap and apron!

To compare this with the old-fashioned system, we need only quote the autobiography of John Stuart Mill. He tells us that he commenced the study of Greek at three years of age, and had mastered the more important works in that language when at eight he commenced Latin; logic he began at twelve years of age. He says, "In the course of instruction, which I have partially retraced, the point most superficially apparent is the great effort to give, during the years of childhood, an amount of knowledge in what are considered the higher branches of education, which is seldom acquired till the age of manhood." "Through the early training bestowed upon me by my father, I started with the advantage of a quarter of a century over my contemporaries."

Apart from the disputed question as to the age at which serious study may commence, education is not likely to be under-estimated in our day of free board schools and

university examinations for woman. Rather are we likely to see "the soul become too big for the body," as Jean Jacques has it, and the latter suffer in the race of competition. Remembering that it is during the years of hardest study that the physique of the child has to be developed, or remain stunted for ever, a well-known lecturer advises that the usual plan of afternoons being devoted to *preparation* and mornings given to *rehearsal*, should be reversed, on the principal that the severer work of committing to memory ought justly to be given to those early hours when mind and body are alike fresh and unfatigued. In *The Golden Butterfly*, Besant suggests a romantic scheme of education, when his heroine, in a revolt from all accepted traditional methods, is not allowed either to read or write, though otherwise well-educated. It is a quaint conceit, and of course the experiment succeeds in the book, producing in Phyllis a sort of Una, who disarms conventionality by the beauty of a mind pure in simplicity, that thinks for itself and judges men and things by its own standard. She is a sweet and scientific savage who ought to have a little island to herself to live in; for Dame Nature is a little old-fashioned, quite a "country-cousin in town," in these days, and her guidance, unchecked by experience, would sometimes be as useful to the unsophisticated girl entering life as that of a hen to her ducklings.

Scarcely more practical is Charles Lamb when he sings the praises of his cousin Bridget Elia, and gives us an excellent recipe for the making of an old maid!

"Her education in youth was not much attended to, and she happily missed all that train of female garniture which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early by accident or design into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up much in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it, but I can answer for it that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids."—*Mackery End*.

Fancy our little girls poring over *Tom Jones*, *Roderick Random*, *Gulliver's Travels*, Byron's or Shakespeare's sonnets, and



other such "old English reading," in which coarseness is garnished by wit and fancy and beautiful language. The very thought is warning enough against indiscriminate reading. In old times, however, the restrictions imposed upon a girl's reading by careful parents are often amusing to look back upon, from these free and easy days. I remember being given the three volumes of *The Fairchild Family*, that pious and didactic work, with the injunction not to read the third volume until I was sixteen, as it was "far too old for me." And yet I, in common with most English children, was encouraged to study for myself in those immature days, the books of the Old Testament, containing besides the record of all sorts of crimes, the moral code of the Jewish nation, by no means necessary for religious instruction. I venture to think that though extreme childhood may, in its innocence and ignorance, hear, read and speak of, with impunity, such subjects, it is not so when womanhood begins to dawn; the sleep-walker may scale a giddy height, unharmed, until suddenly awakened.

(To be continued.)

## ON LABOUR OF THE HANDS.

BY NEIL WYNN WILLIAMS.

*Author of "The Bayonet that Came Home," etc.*

MAN differentiates himself from man by a growth towards material prosperity. In proportion as he is prosperous, he ceases to use his hands for purposes of manual toil; and if he should labour in any way, labours with his brain. Extremes meet: the uncivilised and the super-civilised savouring of their respective prosperities encounter one another upon that common ground of opinion, which is carpeted with a haughty contempt for soil-stained hands. Wealth, and the education of wealth, are theirs: power, and the honours of power, are theirs: they possess an environment peculiar to themselves, and those others are without its pale. Granted! But the position is not exhausted with its genesis. It must be maintained. Brain power of itself is insufficient to the purpose, it calls in the aid of the hand. Thereby, it admits a dependency in degree. And negatives to reason, the assumption of a lofty superiority, that would separate itself both in sentiment and daily life from the handling of a tool or the removal of a jacket.

In an age devoted to a fierce pursuit of intellectual education, one which sees thousands divorced from the labours of the field by a wealth of machinery, there is growing up a widespread distaste towards purely manual labour as a life's vocation, or as a life's assistance towards an honest independence. Affirmations abound that even the carking difficulties of the period will not induce the farmer to place his hands to the plough, or his wife and daughters to quit their luxurious cult of the intellect for the more elemental study of the dairy. And a glib reason, with a too sweeping application, is advanced by the farmer to rot these affirmations into the manure of a national sympathy for his otherwise hard case. He must direct, he must supervise: but if he use his hands it is to waste his time and his energy which could be better employed elsewhere. It is an argument which